

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 19, 2019

The Honorable Eric M. Thorson
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Inspector General Thorson:

I write to request that your office investigate the circumstances surrounding the Department of Treasury's decision to delay redesign of the \$20 note featuring the portrait of Harriet Tubman, including any involvement by the White House in this decision. More than three years ago, Secretary Jacob Lew announced that he had ordered the acceleration of redesigns of the \$20, \$10 and \$5 notes, and that the "final concept design" of the \$20 note, including Harriet Tubman's portrait, would be released in 2020.

Shortly after the Trump Administration took office, however, all mentions of the Tubman \$20 bill were deleted without explanation from the Treasury Department's website. Then we learned, according to recent testimony by Secretary Steven Mnuchin that a decision had been made to delay the release of the new \$20 note until the year 2028. The Treasury Department subsequently refused to confirm that Harriet Tubman's image would ever appear on the new note – notwithstanding recent reports that the Bureau of Engraving and Printing has already completed extensive planning work on the redesign effort.

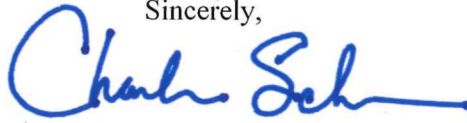
We do not know the real reason for these decisions, but we do know that during his campaign, President Trump referred to efforts to replace President Jackson's likeness on the front of the \$20 note as "pure political correctness." Secretary Mnuchin attempted to explain the delay as necessary to accommodate anti-counterfeiting measures, but it is simply not credible that with all the resources and expertise of the U.S. Treasury and Secret Service, a decade or more could be required to produce a new \$20 bill. If the Empire State Building could be completed in 13 months almost 100 years ago, the 21st century Treasury Department ought to be able to get this job done in a reasonable period of time.

Harriet Tubman was an extraordinary American and New Yorker whose story deserves to be shared with current and future generations. She deserves to be honored for her bravery, compassion, and service to the United States. There is no reason to reverse the original decision to recognize her heroic legacy on the \$20 note. Any unnecessary delays, especially for political reasons, in redesigning the \$20 note in her honor are improper and unacceptable.

For these reasons, I ask that you conduct an investigation into decisions made at the Treasury since January of 2018 regarding the delay of the redesign of the \$20 note. I also ask that you review the involvement of other participants in the interagency process related to the redesign – including the Secret Service, Federal Reserve, and the White House – to ensure that political considerations have not been allowed to infect the process for designing American currency.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Charles E. Schumer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Charles E. Schumer